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The Muslim Brotherhood and Arab Politics

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A Research Paper

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The Muslim Brotherhood and Arab Politics

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
the Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, NESA,
[redacted]

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**The Muslim Brotherhood
and Arab Politics**

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Overview

*Information available
as of 8 September 1982
was used in this report.*

The Muslim Brotherhood is the most important fundamentalist Islamic organization in the Arab World. It is the largest opposition group in Egypt and has challenged the ruling regimes of Syria and Sudan. It also plays an important role in the internal politics of Jordan and has members in a number of other Arab states. The popularity of the Brotherhood, which seeks a return to Islamic values and adherence to Islamic law, has increased as the latest Islamic resurgence has gained strength.

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Despite occasional journalistic claims that a monolithic Muslim Brotherhood exists under the leadership of a shadowy Supreme Guide, we believe that Brotherhood organizations in the various Arab states are distinct groups that formulate their own policies. There is evidence of cooperation on some issues and the giving of mutual aid when necessary.

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In recent years Brotherhood leaders in Egypt and Sudan have adopted an increasingly moderate stance toward the governments of those countries. The Brotherhood in Egypt has reacted positively to conciliatory overtures from President Mubarak, while the organization in Sudan has been effectively co-opted by the Nimeiri regime. The organization operates in Jordan and most other Arab states with the tacit permission of the government.

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The Brotherhood, nevertheless, retains the potential to become a seriously destabilizing force in the region. The individual organizations could adopt confrontational postures if the host governments implement or persist in policies that conflict with the Brotherhood's basic ideology. Leadership changes that bring to power younger, more aggressive members of the organization also could lead to a more militant stance toward these governments.

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The major exception to the trend toward cooperation has been in Syria, where the Brotherhood continues to seek the overthrow of the Alawite regime of Hafiz al-Assad. Serious setbacks in recent conflicts with the Syrian regime, however, will force the Brotherhood to abandon immediate efforts to topple the government and instead focus on terrorism and assassination.

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The Muslim Brotherhood and Arab Politics

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The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Shaykh Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. Through an aggressive propaganda effort the organization grew until in the 1940s it rivaled other large political groups in Egypt. The Brotherhood began to appear in other Arab states following World War II. For the most part the organization was spread by students returning from Egypt or by Brotherhood members who fled Egypt during periods of government repression. Only in Syria, Sudan, and Jordan, however, did the Brotherhood gain political significance.

The basic goal of the Muslim Brotherhood is the creation of a modern political community based on Islamic precepts. Like the movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini that deposed the Shah of Iran in February 1979, the Brotherhood calls for the elimination of corrupting, Western influences in society. The Brotherhood's origins, however, are found in Sunni rather than the more militant Shia version of Islam, and its position on the imposition of Islamic morality is generally less fanatical than Shia groups. Unlike the more radical Shias, the Brotherhood seems willing to attempt, when possible, to influence the policy of secular regimes by nonviolent means. Brotherhood leaders initially were encouraged by the rise to power of Khomeini, but they became disillusioned by the excesses of the new regime in Tehran

Objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood

Many of the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood have been spelled out by Al-Da'wah, the official periodical of the Egyptian Brotherhood.^a Its overall objective is the implementation of an "Islamic order" based on a set of moral and ethical principles that governments in Muslim states must follow. These include:

- *Substitution of Islamic shariah, or religious law, for Western-inspired legal systems.*
- *An economy based on Koranic principles, including the abolition of interest and the replacement of tax codes by the traditional zakat, or alms tax, to help the poor.*
- *The relegation of women to the home to fulfill their divinely ordered function of bearing and raising children.*

Al-Da'wah also has specifically called on the Egyptian Government to:

- *Ban the sale of alcoholic beverages.*
- *Forbid birth control.*
- *Abandon Sadat's "open door" economic policy.*

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The Brotherhood Today

Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood is the largest and most important opposition group in the country. The US Embassy estimates that it has as many as 500,000 members, and several million other Egyptians probably sympathize with its ideology. Despite the arrest of many Brotherhood members in 1981, the organization has continued to eschew the violence that brought it into open conflict with the Nasir regime in the 1950s.

Relations between the Brotherhood and the government were poor under Nasir but improved markedly after Sadat assumed power in 1970. Sadat sought support from Islamic elements to balance the power of his leftist and Nasirist opponents. He removed some of the restraints imposed on the Islamic hierarchy

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during the Nasir era, and he released many Brotherhood members from prison. In return, Sadat received the support of Brotherhood leaders in countering the growing strength of antiregime elements in the universities. He also won Brotherhood backing for the expulsion of the Soviets from Egypt in July 1972 and the initiation of the war against Israel in October 1973. [redacted]

This period of cooperation, however, began to deteriorate in 1976-77. The Brotherhood attacked the government for permitting "indecent" and "vulgar" programs on radio and television and criticized the educational system for failing to emphasize Islam. According to open sources, the Brotherhood also became disgruntled because of Sadat's continued refusal to allow it to organize as a political party and Sadat's trip to Israel in 1977, which the Brotherhood regarded as abandonment of the common Arab cause. Although the government initiated a crackdown on fundamentalist groups, including the Brotherhood, in September 1981, the organization apparently was not involved in Sadat's assassination, and for the most part it escaped the subsequent more vigorous crackdown on extremist Islamic groups. [redacted]

Brotherhood leaders had a positive first impression of President Mubarak. They hoped that the new Egyptian leader would combat corruption and lead Egypt away from Sadat's conciliatory policies toward Israel and seek better relations with the conservative Arab states. [redacted]

The strong discipline exercised by Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna has declined, but the Brotherhood still operates in Egypt as a secret organization. Its membership below the senior levels and its structure remain largely unknown, but we believe it probably consists of numerous small cells as it did in the 1940s and 1950s. There apparently has been no "Supreme Guide" since the death in 1974 of Hassan al-Hudaybi, who succeeded al-Banna. Instead, the Brotherhood's Office of Guidance, located in Cairo, directs the organization's day-to-day affairs. Umar



Umar Talmasani

Camera Press ©

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Talmasani, the publisher of *Al-Da'wah*, the propaganda organ of the Brotherhood, acts as spokesman for the group and apparently is the most important leader in Egypt. Other prominent members of the organization include Salih Ashmawi, the editor of *Al-Da'wah*, and Shaykh Muhammad Ghazali, who was known to be living in Saudi Arabia in early 1981. [redacted]

Although there is little evidence to suggest that the Brotherhood has formal ties to other fundamentalist groups in Egypt, [redacted] its influence with the student Islamic Societies is strong. These groups espouse many of the same Islamic principles as the Brotherhood but appear to advocate a more militant or activist line. [redacted]

[redacted] Brotherhood has been recruiting in the Egyptian military for some time. Since early 1981 the organization has begun to focus its efforts on retired senior and middle-level officers. The Brotherhood apparently reasons that the former senior officers are unhappy over forced retirement and that the middle-level officers are still young enough to be susceptible to Islamic reformist rhetoric. [redacted]

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[redacted] the
 Brotherhood has some 3,000 trained militiamen in an apparatus called *Al-Katiba* (The Battalion) to defend against renewed suppression by the government or for protection in any confrontation with extremist groups.



Hasan al-Turabi

Camera Press ©

Sudan. Despite its small membership, estimates of which range from 60,000 to 300,000 in a country of approximately 20 million, the Muslim Brotherhood is a significant force on the Sudanese political scene. Hasan al-Turabi, the Trustee General and senior official of the Brotherhood, also serves as Sudan's Attorney General. Yasin al-Imam, a newspaper editor, is Deputy Trustee General. The principal executive body, the Politburo, is chaired by Turabi and meets regularly in Khartoum. An advisory council, also chaired by Turabi and composed of representatives from all regions of the country, elects the Politburo and makes policy recommendations. [redacted]

Although political parties are illegal in Sudan, the government has permitted the Brotherhood to build its strength among university students at the expense of other political groups, particularly the Communists. [redacted]

[redacted] Although he previously was critical of Nimeiri's foreign and domestic policies, Turabi apparently has decided that Nimeiri is preferable to any likely alternative. [redacted]

The main strength of the Brotherhood in Sudan is found in the country's small educated class. It continues to recruit heavily among the students and faculty of Khartoum University, where it has dominated the influential student union since 1980. It is also well represented among professional groups, and a significant number of National Assembly delegates are believed to be members. Although the Brotherhood is less influential than the Sudanese Communist Party

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among the labor unions, it is believed by the US Embassy to be gaining strength in that element of society. [redacted]

In 1980 Turabi withstood a challenge to his leadership by a faction of the Brotherhood that criticized his alleged liberal interpretation of Islamic precepts and his acceptance of President Nimeiri's national reconciliation program. [redacted]

[redacted] Turabi's 25X1
 opponents, who also recommended closer ties to the 25X1
 Brotherhood in Egypt, were expelled from the organization. As of mid-1982 Turabi appeared to be in firm 25X1
 control of the Sudanese Brotherhood. [redacted]

Jordan. The Brotherhood in Jordan operates legally and may have as many as 50,000 members and supporters. It is headed by a Supreme Guide, Shaykh Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifah, and a Council of Guides. As in other Arab countries, the Brotherhood has focused its efforts on recruiting students and in recent years has also been successful in increasing its strength in professional organizations. [redacted]

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King Hussein uses the Brotherhood to counter leftist influence but recognizes that fundamentalist Islam could pose a threat to his survival, according to the US Embassy, and he has ordered close surveillance of all Islamic groups, including the Brotherhood.

Syria. In 1980 the membership of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria was estimated [redacted] at 10,000 persons divided into several factions. In addition, a covert terrorist arm called the Followers of Marwan Hadid may have had as many as 1,000 members. We believe that this group formed the core of those who fought the Syrian military in Aleppo in the spring of 1980 and in Hama in 1982.

In early 1981 two distinct elements were evident in the Brotherhood in Jordan, [redacted]

[redacted] Older members of the Brotherhood, including the leadership, favored a nonactivist policy and cooperation with the government. A group of younger, more activist members opposed cooperation with the regime but stopped short of calling for the overthrow of the King. These two groups differed most over policy toward Syria. The leadership group agreed to a government request not to support Brotherhood members from Syria, either in Syria or in Jordan. The younger members argued that it was the duty of the Brotherhood in Jordan to continue aiding the organization in Syria. [redacted]

The Army constitutes the major obstacle to efforts by Islamic fundamentalists to depose the King. Despite the fact that all members of the armed forces are specifically prohibited from membership in the Brotherhood, we believe that a few do belong, and a number sympathize with the organization's goals. Those who belong to the Brotherhood, however, keep a low profile and make little or no effort to recruit their acquaintances. [redacted]

The Brotherhood also has a strong following in the Israeli-occupied territories, particularly the West Bank, [redacted] Its major areas of strength are in the towns of Hebron, Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, and Ramallah. The organization on the West Bank receives financial support from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Because the Brotherhood has challenged the dominance of leftist and Palestinian nationalist groups, the Israelis have adopted a tolerant view of its activities. [redacted]

The failure of Brotherhood factions in different areas of Syria to coordinate their activities has handicapped the organization's ability to operate effectively against the Assad regime,

Despite these differences and the serious losses suffered by the Brotherhood in the conflicts with the government, it remains dedicated to the ouster of the Assad regime. The organization's ability to challenge the government, however, has been severely weakened. We believe that by provoking the regime to move forcefully against its stronghold in Hama, the Brotherhood had hoped to widen existing divisions between the regime and the Syrian people. The heavy casualties inflicted on the civilian population disturbed many Syrians, but most apparently would prefer a moderate, Sunni Muslim-controlled government and are unwilling to support the Brotherhood's attempt to seize power. The Brotherhood, nevertheless, retains the capacity to conduct terrorist operations in Syria, and government leaders, including Assad, remain primary targets for assassination attempts.

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Issam al-Attar

A Brotherhood group has long been present in North Yemen but has only recently become involved in politics. The US Embassy believes that although its political influence is growing, it probably will not soon have a significant impact on the regime's foreign or domestic policies. Since 1980 a paramilitary organization led by Muslim Brothers and armed by the Saudis has periodically participated in fighting against South Yemeni-backed insurgents. In August 1982 Muslim Brothers used Saudi subventions to secure 25 of the 50 seats on the newly created Permanent Committee of the Popular Congress. According to the US Embassy, the Brotherhood also controls the student union at Sanaa University. President Salih regards the Saudis and their North Yemeni allies as dangerous political adversaries. He knows that the Brotherhood in North Yemen relies heavily on Saudi subsidies and would swiftly curtail its political activities if it challenged his authority.

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Elsewhere in the Arab World

Small Muslim Brotherhood groups can be found in several other Arab countries. These organizations, however, generally are small and do not constitute a threat to the stability of these states.

In Saudi Arabia, Islamic fundamentalism as a revivalist movement has been preempted by the essentially Islamic nature of the government. Moreover, since the attack in 1979 on the Great Mosque of Mecca by religious fanatics, the regime has attempted to bolster its Islamic credentials by accelerating efforts to weed out those aspects of Western culture deemed most objectionable by the religious hierarchy. A Brotherhood group exists in the kingdom, but it consists mainly of Egyptians and Syrians. The government permits Brotherhood members to reside in Saudi Arabia as long as they refrain from engaging in domestic political activity.

In Morocco, a Brotherhood group was organized in 1972 with government permission to counter leftist influence, according to the US Embassy. Known as the Islamic Youth Movement, it is reported to have several thousand members and is strongest in Casablanca, Marrakech, and Fez. The government has thoroughly penetrated the group, which advocates violence as the sole means of "purifying" Muslim society.

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In Algeria, a small number of university students may be members of the Brotherhood, but they are described by the US Embassy as apolitical and primarily interested in bringing about a religious revival. It is unclear if they have any ties to Muslim Brotherhood groups elsewhere in the Middle East.

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Some of the estimated 4,200 Egyptians in Bahrain are also believed to be members of the organization. The Brotherhood in Bahrain does not, in our view, represent a threat to the security of the state.

Recent Trends

There appears to have been steady, although sometimes uneven, movement toward closer cooperation between most Muslim Brotherhood groups and their governments. Leaders of Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan have at times used the Brotherhood to counter threats from leftists and secular Arab nationalists. In efforts to gain the cooperation of the Islamic establishment, including the Brotherhood, these Arab leaders have

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Prominent Muslim Brotherhood Leaders

Umar Talmasani *Principal Brotherhood spokesman in Egypt and publisher of the organization's periodical, Al-Da'wah.*

Salih Ashmawi *Editor of Al-Da'wah. Like Talmasani, a high-level official of the Egyptian Brotherhood during its early days.*

Muhammad Ghazali *A senior member of the Egyptian Brotherhood who lives in Saudi Arabia.*

Hasan al-Turabi *Trustee General of the Brotherhood in Sudan since 1969 and de facto leader since 1965. He has served as the country's Attorney General since 1979.*

Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifah *Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood in Jordan. Advocates cooperation with the government.*

Adnan Sad al-Din *Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood in Syria. Believed to be in exile in Europe.*

Said Hawa *Deputy Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood in Syria. Described as the ideologist of the Syrian organization, he is also believed to be living in Europe.*

Issam al-Attar *Forced out as Supreme Guide of Brotherhood in Syria in early 1981 after conflict with government in Aleppo. Lives in exile in Aachen, West Germany, where he is chairman of an Islamic center.*

attempted to strengthen their Muslim credentials. In Jordan and Sudan members of the Brotherhood have been appointed to high positions in the government. For the most part, the local Brotherhood organizations have been receptive to such approaches as long as the governments did not go out of their way to undermine the Brotherhood's basic ideology.

Although the Brotherhood in Egypt has openly challenged some government policies, in recent years it has restricted itself largely to propaganda activities. To avoid provoking the Brotherhood into more extreme action, the government in turn generally has dealt with the organization in a restrained manner. In January 1979, after *Al-Da'wah* accused President Sadat of collaborating with Israel and the CIA against the Brotherhood, the government banned only one issue of the journal. Consistent criticism of government policies, however, finally led Sadat to make the Brotherhood a principal target of a crackdown on all opposition groups in September 1981. *Al-Da'wah* was banned, and a number of Brotherhood members, including Talmasani, were arrested.

Under Mubarak, the government has once again sought an accommodation with the Brotherhood. Mubarak released Talmasani and other leaders of the organization and is giving them some latitude to express their views.

In Sudan, following Nimeiri's reconciliation with his conservative opponents that began in 1977, the Brotherhood abandoned its efforts to topple the Sudanese leader and adopted a policy of cautious cooperation with the government. Brotherhood leader Hasan al-Turabi was released from prison, given a position in the Sudanese Socialist Union, and later named Attorney General.

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Another phenomenon worth noting is that the leaders of the Brotherhood organizations in Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan are mostly older men who appear to have lost their enthusiasm for direct confrontation with the government. In Egypt, for example, all of the leadership is over 60, and some, including Umar Talmasani, are in their seventies. Shaykh Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Khalifah of Jordan is in his late sixties. One of the youngest is Hasan al-Turabi of Sudan, who is 50. Most of these leaders have spent time in prison or exile and have become increasingly susceptible to government efforts to co-opt them. [redacted]

International Cooperation

Several reports in recent years have suggested that Muslim Brotherhood groups in the various Arab countries are directed from a single international headquarters or by a central leadership body. [redacted]

We believe, however, that some cooperation between Brotherhood organizations in the Arab countries occurs, especially during times of crisis for one of the groups. [redacted]

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In addition to periodic meetings in Europe, Brotherhood representatives also meet in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. [redacted]

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The network of Islamic centers in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere may provide a mechanism for sustained cooperation, particularly on religious and propaganda matters. The foremost of these is the center in Geneva, Switzerland, headed by Said Ramadan, a prominent Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood figure. [redacted]

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Funding

Because of the secretive nature of the Brotherhood's activities, there is little hard information about the manner in which various national Brotherhoods obtain financial support. Although there was a formal dues-paying mechanism in the early days of the Egyptian organization, many observers believe that most funds are now obtained through donations from Brotherhood members or sympathizers, particularly those in the oil-rich states of the Arabian Peninsula. [redacted]

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There is, however, no independent confirmation of these or other claims about the existence of an international leadership body. We believe that the Brotherhood organizations in the various states instead have developed since the 1950s into separate and in some ways nationalistic groups. Hasan al-Turabi, Trustee General of the Brotherhood in Sudan, stated in 1980 that there is no international leadership, although some Brotherhood leaders might claim otherwise in order to give the impression that the Brotherhood is more powerful than it actually is. According to Turabi, when Brotherhood representatives meet, they do so as individuals, not as representatives of particular Brotherhood groups. [redacted]

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Outlook

Future relations between the Brotherhood organizations and the Arab governments will depend to a considerable extent on the course of the Islamic resurgence and on future political events in the individual states. The vitality of Islam over the centuries has tended to fluctuate, usually in reaction to external challenges, and it is not clear if the present revival is still on the upswing. The attitude of the Brotherhood organizations toward these governments also will depend on their ability to find solutions to basic economic and social problems. Failure by the regimes to halt the gradual decline in the living standards of their citizens will increase the popular appeal of all opposition groups, including the Brotherhood. [redacted]

In the near term, the Brotherhood probably will continue to pursue its generally nonconfrontational policy toward the governments in Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan. The older, more conservative leadership of the organizations in these three states is likely to continue to avoid actions that could lead to harsh repression. For their part, these governments would prefer, if at all possible, to continue to avoid major disagreements with the Brotherhood. [redacted]

Over the longer run, however, conflict between the Brotherhood and the governments of Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan remains a definite possibility. Although President Mubarak has taken some steps to address Islamic sensitivities, there is no indication thus far that he intends to abandon the "open door" economic policy that fundamentalists charge is corrupting Egyptian society. More important to the Brotherhood, Mubarak has indicated that he will not reject the Camp David Accords with Israel. In Sudan and Jordan a confrontation appears somewhat less likely but could develop if these governments fail to take sufficient account of Brotherhood sensitivities and goals. [redacted]

A key leadership change in the Brotherhood in any of the three states also could lead to a more militant posture toward the government. Although little is known of the views of second-echelon leaders of the organization, some elements within the Brotherhood in each country have been critical of current leaders for identifying too closely with their host governments. In any event, the Brotherhood is likely to continue to be the spawning ground for more radical groups formed by breakaway Brotherhood members dissatisfied with the moderation of the current leadership. [redacted]

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In Syria, the Brotherhood will continue to work actively against the Assad regime. The setbacks suffered by the Brotherhood in 1980 and 1982, however, will limit its ability to challenge the regime seriously over the next year unless it aligns itself with other dissident groups. [redacted]

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Even though the Muslim Brotherhood does not appear to constitute a serious immediate threat to any Arab regime, the organization will continue to influence policies in such states as Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan. The leaders of these states realize that Brotherhood ideals are appealing to important segments of their societies, and that the organization could develop into a more effective opposition force under certain circumstances. Therefore, they will continue to consider the Brotherhood's conservative outlook when framing foreign and domestic policies. [redacted]

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Appendix

Origins and History

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Shaykh Hassan al-Banna in Ismailia, Egypt, in 1928. Three years later Banna moved his headquarters to Cairo, where he spent the next decade building the movement by recruiting among civil servants, students, workers, and peasants. The new organization tended to attract recent immigrants from rural areas who were alienated by the widespread foreign influence present in the metropolitan areas and their impersonal nature. Banna and his followers believed that Islamic morality was threatened by the growing tendency in Egypt toward secularization and Westernization.

They demanded a return to Islamic *shariah* law and adherence to an Islamic code of conduct. [redacted]

In the years immediately following World War II, the Brotherhood became the second-largest political movement in Egypt, exceeded in size by the secular, nationalist Wafd Party. The Brotherhood's strength stemmed largely from the wide economic, social, and educational network it had established and its willingness to use violence or threats to achieve its ends. [redacted]

The Brotherhood began to lose strength, however, after Banna was assassinated by government agents in 1949. Moreover, the organization had been officially banned the previous year after a Brotherhood member murdered Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha. Banna's successor, Hassan al-Hudaybi, was opposed by some members of the ruling body of the Brotherhood, and the subsequent struggle for power further weakened the organization. [redacted]

Gamal Abd al-Nasir's Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which came to power after the 1952 coup, at first cooperated with the Brotherhood. In the early 1940s Banna had been in contact with the group of discontented young military officers led by Nasir that later became known as the "Free Officers." Anti-monarchist as well as anti-Wafd, the Brotherhood was initially inclined to support the new regime. The RCC, however, soon recognized that it could not tolerate a powerful rival like the Brotherhood. [redacted]

Nasir moved decisively to suppress the Brotherhood in 1954 after an assassination attempt against him by a member of the organization. Seven members of the Brotherhood were hanged and others sentenced to various terms in prison. Hudaybi received a life sentence. Despite this setback, the Brotherhood survived underground for a decade and began a tentative comeback in 1964. In 1966, however, authorities discovered another Brotherhood conspiracy against Nasir. Three more members were hanged and a large number imprisoned. [redacted]

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Under the presidency of Anwar Sadat in the early 1970s, many of the repressive tactics employed by Nasir were eased and more political activity tolerated. Although it continued to be classified as an illegal party, the Brotherhood began for the first time in some years to function in a relatively open manner. In 1976 the government gave the Brotherhood permission to begin publishing a periodical entitled *Al-Da'wah* (The Call). Through this vehicle the Brotherhood propagated its ideas and began commenting on government policy. It became bolder and in 1977 vigorously criticized Sadat's trip to Jerusalem and his agreement the following year to the Camp David Accords. Continued Brotherhood opposition to his policies finally led Sadat in September 1981, one month before his assassination, to arrest a number of Brotherhood leaders, including Umar Talmasani, the publisher of *Al-Da'wah*. [redacted]

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In Syria, the Brotherhood was organized in 1945 by representatives of Hassan al-Banna who recruited members of an Islamic youth organization founded in the 1930s. Although the Brotherhood coexisted for several years with other political groups in Syria, the seizure of power by the Syrian Baath Party in 1963 led to the suppression of the Brotherhood the following year. In 1966 the wing of the Baath Party

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controlled by the Alawites, a minority religious group, deposed the Sunni Muslim leadership of the party. The Brotherhood does not recognize the Alawites as true Muslims, and this added to the hostility between the organization and the regime, which since 1970 has been led by Hafiz al-Assad.

In the late 1970s the Brotherhood, led by the exiled Supreme Guide Issam al-Attar, decided to move directly against the government. In June 1979 the Brotherhood killed 50 Alawite cadets at the artillery school in Aleppo. The government responded by passing a law that made membership in the Brotherhood punishable by death. In early 1980, alarmed by apparent Brotherhood cooperation with professional and merchants' groups in Aleppo, the government moved forcefully to suppress the organization in that city. Employing units from the Army and Special Forces, the Assad regime reasserted its control over Aleppo after several months of fighting.

The Brotherhood, under more aggressive leadership headed by a new Supreme Guide, Adnan Sad al-Din, began to prepare for a major antigovernment action centered in the city of Hama. In early 1982, however, the government learned of the plan and moved to crush resistance in the city, long a Brotherhood stronghold. The action provoked an uprising, but after several weeks of fierce fighting, the government's military forces prevailed.

The Brotherhood in *Sudan* was founded in the mid-1950s. Initially its membership was restricted to a small elite group of Khartoum University students and graduates. In 1964, according to a US specialist in Sudanese studies, it organized formally and became the nucleus of the Islamic Charter Front, a larger mass organization that for the next five years competed with other political parties for seats in the National Assembly. Charter Front members advocated the adoption of an Islamic constitution and opposed closer links to Egypt because of the Nasir regime's crackdown on the Brotherhood.

After Gaafar Nimeiri seized power in 1969, he banned political parties and jailed their leaders, including Brotherhood leader Hasan al-Turabi. The Brotherhood and other conservative groups—the Ansar and Khatmiyyah Islamic sects—then formed an anti-Nimeiri National Front. Even though Nimeiri eased his stance after a Communist effort to depose him in 1971, the Front continued efforts to oust him. Coup attempts in 1975 and 1976 finally forced Nimeiri to seek a reconciliation with his conservative opponents. The most important of these, the Ansar Muslim sect and the Muslim Brotherhood, agreed to dissolve the Front in return for liberalization of the political process. Turabi was released from jail and appointed to a post in the Sudanese Socialist Union, the nation's only legal political organization. Since August 1979 he has served as Attorney General.

The Muslim Brotherhood has been active in *Jordan* since the late 1940s and was represented in the now-defunct Council of Deputies before the ban on political groups in 1957. In the early 1960s the Brotherhood's growing political power led the government to jail a number of its leaders and ban its publications. Subsequently, a tacit understanding was reached whereby the government agreed to permit the Brotherhood to continue to function as long as it avoided political activity. Although the importance of the Brotherhood in Jordan appeared to decline in the late 1960s, it assumed a new significance in the 1970s when many Jordanians were increasingly attracted to Islamic fundamentalism.

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